
DRAFT SYLLABUS

Tuesdays 9am-noon

Dr. Christopher B. Zeichmann

Office hours: noon-1pm Tuesday (EM 005)
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Purpose

This course is the first part of a two-part introductory survey. The course aims to acquaint the student with a number of common and significant issues which scholars and other students of the New Testament gospels have experienced when reading these texts. In other words, it is a foretaste of the feast to come for those who would continue in this line of inquiry.

Outcomes – By the end of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe each of the canonical gospels as a distinctive narrative
2. Demonstrate acquaintance with the manuscript tradition of the New Testament and with the Synoptic Problem (Two Source Hypothesis)
3. Contrast original and contemporary contexts of the canonical gospels and explain how habitual ways of reading these texts may be problematical or promising
4. Practice a committed critical style of theological conversation with the biblical text, especially vis-à-vis Christology

Student Assessment

Student assessment will be based upon:

1. Regular attendance with informed participation in plenary discussion (10 %)
2. Constructive and insightful contribution to small-group work (15%)
3. Timely and proper completion of four written assignments (75%)
Textbooks

- *The Christian Bible* (including the Apocrypha; preferably, the Revised Standard Version or the New Revised Standard Version)

Accommodations
Students with diverse learning styles are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, I invite you to approach the Accessibility Office as soon as possible.

Attendance Policy
Quoted from Emmanuel College Policies and Procedures: “Attendance is mandatory. A high rate of attendance is key to student success, given the nature of theological education and the importance of classroom interaction and learning at Emmanuel College. Students should not accept significant outside obligations during the academic term. For a regular course, students who register and miss two (2) classes may receive a lower or failing grade for the course. In order to avoid this penalty, students must notify their instructor with a valid reason for any absence before class. Students missing twenty-five (25) percent or more of a course will be automatically withdrawn from that course.” For the present class, that means you cannot miss more than two sessions.

Written Assignments
All papers are to be 12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and using 1” margins on all sides. Written assignments should synthesize the content of the assigned readings, learning from classroom, small-group discussions, and student response to the weekly lectures. I would discourage you from citing texts that have not been assigned: it is better to keep focused on what we have discussed in the context of the class. Assignments must be submitted via Quercus; physical copies are not needed.

- Assignment 1 [2-3 pages]. Explain why Mark 16:8 is considered by most scholars to be the “more original” ending of the gospel, and what difference this conclusion makes to your understanding of Mark as a whole.
- Assignment 2 [3-5 pages]. How is Jesus in Matthew different from Jesus in Mark? Be sure to refer to specific texts in both gospels. In your comparison, identify ways in which the Gospel of Matthew is a typical Second Temple Jewish text. Be sure to explain how the Two-Source Hypothesis figures into your comparison of Matthew and Mark.
- Assignment 3 [3-5 pages]. Discuss the claim of the Gospel of Luke (1:1-4) to be a “better gospel.” What do you think this meant for the evangelist? Be sure to discuss at least one episode in Luke which purports to offer “better news” for women, despite being
“business as usual” in the context of Roman social values. In your opinion, does Luke live up to its claim of being a better gospel than its predecessors?

- Assignment 4 [3-5 pages]. Discuss the depiction of “the Jews” in the Gospel of John. How is this portrayal caught up in the theological framework of John’s Gospel as a whole? Be sure to discuss how this issue has implications for your own posture toward John’s theological program. Briefly consider whether or not the historical Jesus offers a viable theological alternative to John’s Jesus.

Outline

I. Introduction, Gospel of Mark, Text Criticism

1. 10 September Introduction
   Ehrman 1-19, 96-102; Brown 3-47

2. 17 September Gospel of Mark
   Ehrman 103-119; Brown 126-170

3. 24 September Textual Criticism [BRING THROCKMORTON]
   Ehrman 20-40; Brown 48-54; Throckmorton x-xxvi

II. Gospel of Matthew, Early Judaism, Synoptic Problem

4. 1 October Gospel of Matthew [BRING THROCKMORTON]
   Ehrman 129-148; Brown 171-224
   FIRST WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE

5. 8 October Second Temple Judaism
   Ehrman 61-81, 274-275; Brown 74-125

6. 15 October Synoptic Problem [BRING THROCKMORTON]
   Ehrman 120-128; Brown 831-840; Throckmorton §§ 1-10

* 22 October 2014 NO CLASS! (Reading Week)

III. Gospel of Luke, Roman Empire, Feminist Criticism

7. 29 October Gospel of Luke
   Ehrman 149-168; Brown 225-278
   SECOND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE
8. 5 November  
   Roman Empire  
   Ehrman 41-60, 257-261, 272-273; Brown 55-70

9. 12 November  
   Gender and Race  
   Ehrman 192-194; Brown 27-28

IV. Gospel of John, Anti-Judaism, Historical Jesus

* 19 November  NO CLASS! (SBL/AAR and American Thanksgiving)

10. 26 November  
   Gospel of John  
   Ehrman 169-191; Brown 333-382

THIRD WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE

11. 3 December  
   Historical Jesus [BRING THROCKMORTON]  
   Ehrman 235-256; Brown 817-830

* 10 December  NO CLASS! (Exam Week)

FOURTH WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE